

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: June 16, 2004

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS  
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-219- Libby-Bonnors Ferry #1, Structures 46/1, 46/6 and 47/1) Project No.  
V-S-04/08

TO: Tom Murphy  
Natural Resource Specialist – TFS/Bell-1

**Proposed Action:** Vegetation management at selected transmission line structures located along the Libby-Bonnors Ferry Transmission Line Right of Way (ROW) for the purpose of fire protection and system reliability. Attachment 1 identifies the transmission line corridor, corridor length, voltage, easement width and structure numbers.

**Location:** The project is situated in Lincoln County, Montana and is in the Spokane Region.

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

**Description of the Proposal:** BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation around selected transmission line structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. BPA plans to conduct vegetation control with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon be a hazard to the transmission line. Unfortunately, BPA's overall goal to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation is not an appropriate strategy for this line segment since it is in a rural residential area.

**Analysis:** This project meets the standards and guidelines for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

## **Planning Steps:**

### **1. Identify facility and the vegetation management need.**

The work involved will be to clear tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon pose a hazard to the lines and selectively eliminating tall growing vegetation *before* it reaches a height or density to begin competing with low-growing vegetation. Target trees are located at the following Bonnors Ferry-Troy #1 transmission line structures:

- Structure 46/1, 150-feet ahead on line (1 tree)
- Structure 46/1, 50-feet ahead on line (5 trees)
- Structure 47/1, 50-feet ahead on line (3 trees)

Also, all off right-of-way trees that are potentially unstable and will fall within a minimum distance or into the zone where the conductors swing will be removed. All work will be accomplished by manual control methods to assure that there is little potential harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants. Desirable low-growing plants will not be disturbed. The work will provide system reliability and fire protection.

The vegetation control will be ongoing over the next 10 years as tall growing vegetation and target trees enter the tolerance zone or the landowner chooses not to maintain the trees as required.

## **2. Identify surrounding land use and landowners/managers and any mitigation.**

The transmission line ROW traverses private, rural and urban ownership lands. The types and density of trees to be removed are noted on Attachment 1, Checklist. No other agencies or Tribal involvement exists.

The landowner will be contacted if trees pose a hazard to the line. This contact will be by letters, phone calls and onsite visits. In areas where there is an active tree agreement, no cutting will be performed if owner brings trees into compliance. In most cases, low growing replacement trees will be offered.

## **3. Identify natural resources and any mitigation.**

### Surface Water Resources

Surface water resources (i.e. lakes, rivers, streams, creeks, wetlands) within a ½ mile vicinity of the corridor have been identified through BPA's GIS system (i.e. Tview2) but no planned work activities will impact these mapped areas.

For any work performed within close proximity of wetlands, the following mitigation measures will be observed:

- No vehicle equipment will enter wetlands.
- All work will be performed using handheld equipment.
- All fueling operations will be performed outside the wetland area.

For any work performed within close proximity of lakes, rivers, streams and creeks, the following buffers and mitigation measures will be observed to avoid disturbing any potential fish habitat:

- Low-growing vegetation that provides shade will be protected. A 35-foot buffer will be observed to protect the creek's canopy.
- No herbicides will be applied near potential fish-bearing waterways. Only cutting and topping will be performed as necessary.
- Cut trees will not be felled into the creek unless directed to do so by the State or Federal Fish & Wildlife.
- Vehicles will be kept away from water channels to minimize erosion and sedimentation of waters.
- Standard erosion control practices will be employed, if necessary, to prevent sedimentation of the water.

### Irrigation sources, Wells or Springs

No known irrigation sources, wells or springs are present along the right of way.

### T&E Species and Habitats

A species list request was received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service on April 14, 2004 identifying listed species in the county that the project is located in. No known locations of T&E listed species and critical habitats have been identified in the project area. Information concerning T&E species and habitats was verified using several databases (i.e. Tview2, Northwest Subbasin Geographic Data Browser, Montana Natural Heritage Program, USFW TESS).

### Sensitive Areas

No visually sensitive areas have been identified.

### Cultural Resources

No cultural resources have been identified. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and a professional archaeologist will be notified.

### Erosion Control

Erosion potential will be minimal due the method of cutting (handheld chainsaws).

Issues concerning T&E listed species/critical habitats and cultural resources have been addressed and work within the project corridor is expected to have a “no effect” on any natural or cultural resources present.

Prior to the beginning of the work, the contractor will be provided with a set of the project maps, supplemental information as well as with a list of management prescriptions from the Vegetation Management EIS.

#### **4. Determine vegetation control and debris disposal methods.**

Vegetation control on all lands will be performed using manual and mechanical methods.

Debris will be disposed using lop and scatter methods.

#### **5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.**

Due to minimal soil disturbance, no seeding is planned.

#### **6. Determine monitoring needs.**

The right-of-way will be inspected after completion of the work to determine if all hazard trees have been removed from the identified structures. Followup monitoring will occur 2-3 times per year to followup with removal of any additional target trees that enter the tolerance zone or if the landowner chooses not to maintain trees as required.

## 7. Prepare appropriate environmental documentation.

**Findings:** This Supplement Analysis finds that 1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; 2) there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ James R. Meyer for \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael A. Rosales  
Environmental Physical Scientist

CONCUR: James M. Kehoe for \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas C. McKinney  
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 06/17/2004

Attachment

cc:

L. Croff - KEC-4  
T. McKinney - KEC-4  
J. Meyer - KEP-4  
J. Sharpe - KEPR-4  
M. Rosales – KEPR/Bell-1  
P. Key - LC-7  
J. Hilliard Creecy - T-DITT2  
K. Rodd - TF/DOB-1  
D. Labrosse – TFS/Bell-1  
J. Lahti – TFS/Bell-1  
M. Borrows – TFSF/Bell  
Environmental File - KEC-4  
Official File - KEP (EQ-14)